



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Vanessa Gulati
617-626-1119

**STATE AND PARTNERS CELEBRATE LAND ACQUISITIONS
AT MT. HOLYOKE RANGE STATE PARK**

AMHERST—Today, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and partners celebrated the acquisition of land parcels in Amherst, Granby, Hadley and South Hadley in a ceremony at the Notch Visitor Center in Amherst. The parcels are to become part of Mt. Holyoke Range State Park. DCR also honored the landowners, trusts, private groups and other partners that assisted in the acquisition of these parcels and others acquired since the park's creation.

“These additions to Mt. Holyoke Range State Park would not have been possible without the support and generosity of our numerous dedicated partners,” said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. “Not only will they expand this important state park, they will also help connect the park to a broader range of habitats and natural resources.”

The parcels acquired range in size from seven acres to nearly 50. One will connect Mt. Holyoke Range State Park to the nearby Connective River Greenway State Park, providing a 1,000-foot natural corridor making passage between the two parks easier for wildlife and hikers. Recent land acquisitions include:

- The **Gurvitch tract** in Amherst (33 acres). Includes 400 feet of the Metacomet & Monadnock Trail (proposed as a national scenic trail) and fills in an area that otherwise might have allowed intrusive uses in the Park.
- The **Cavanaugh tract** in South Hadley (seven acre in-holding). Provides peripheral trail connection and significant buffer area to endangered salamander (*Ambistoma opacum*) pools.
- The **Kohl tract** in Hadley (49 acres). This site is critical, as it connects Mt. Holyoke Range State Park to the Connecticut River Greenway State Park and provides a 1,000-foot natural corridor between the two for wildlife and recreational hiking trails.
- The **West tract** in Hadley (14 acres). Provides hiking access and includes a small portion of the top of the Mt. Holyoke Range near Skinner Summit House.

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Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston MA 02114-2119
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Mitt Romney
Governor

Kerry Healey
Lt. Governor

Robert W. Gollidge, Jr., Secretary
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Stephen H. Burrington, Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

The Gurvitch and Cavanaugh tracts were acquired with considerable assistance from Kestrel Trust and Valley Land Fund respectively.

DCR presented Certificates of Appreciation to 19 groups, individuals and towns during the ceremony. Non-profit organizations honored include the Friends of the Mt. Holyoke Range, the Mt. Holyoke Range Advisory Committee, the Kestrel Trust, the Valley Land Fund, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, PBS station WGBY-TV, and Save the Mountain. Landowners and other individuals cited include: Peter Johnson, Karen Searcy, Lloyd Gamble, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Broussard, William West, Douglas Kohl, Mr. and Mrs. David Smith. In addition, five municipalities were honored for their support of land preservation on the Range including the Towns of Hadley, Granby, South Hadley, Amherst and Belchertown, all of whom have provided assistance of some kind in the acquisition of these or other parcels now part of the state park.

During the event, Commissioner Burrington and Director of State Parks and Recreation Priscilla Geigis also honored DCR Connecticut Valley Action Program Director Terry Blunt for more than 20 years of service, providing planning and technical assistance, and for his work in developing successful public-private partnerships to preserve and protect the Mt. Holyoke Range and the Connecticut River Valley.

Created in the early 1970s, Mt. Holyoke Range State Park has been expanded considerably from the original 300-acre tract on Mt. Holyoke itself, given to the state by Joseph Allen Skinner. The park now consists of over 3,000 acres of land along the Mt. Holyoke Range, one of North America's only east-west oriented mountain ranges, in the towns of Belchertown, Granby, Amherst, Hadley and South Hadley. Some 30% of this land was acquired with the assistance of partner groups, landowners, trusts, and others. Visitors come to the park for hiking, walking, scenic overlooks, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding and hunting.

A map of the range showing the newly-acquired parcels is available upon request.

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